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Social Inclusion Attitude, an Insight among Teachers from Disadvantaged Areas

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Abstract: *The concept of social inclusion is about accepting diversity and acknowledging the need to find solutions and mechanisms to meet the specific particularities of all types of people. The issue of social inclusion was particularly relevant in the past century context and it has maintained its topicality in the social-economic and political context of the 21st century. The present research is a analysis of the attitude of a group of secondary school teachers on next research topics: self-evaluation of knowledge about social inclusion; self perception regarding its importance and its impact on the school and local community; their perception of social inclusion; their opinions about the causes of social exclusion and the identification of effective strategies and best practices in facilitating social inclusion. The aim of our approach has been to identify the perspective of the teachers working in high schools from disadvantaged areas, especially in the rural ones, in order to identify some supporting models and to find future paths of specific intervention. We believe that our approach can lead to the identification of effective tools for the cooperation and collaboration between the pre-university and university levels for planning activities related to teacher training on inclusive education and equal opportunities, and for being able to facilitate the access of disadvantaged students to all kinds of education.*

Keywords: *social inclusion; inclusive education, collaboration; education access; career guidance and counselling.*

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Introduction – clarification and conceptual interdependencies

Our study's problematics stems from the major value of inclusion. According to recent research, inclusion implies the transformation of the educational system and space so that all students can participate without any restrictions in the process in order to have equal opportunities for development (Morentin-Encina et al., 2022). The key concepts of the theoretical dimension of our study, namely social inclusion, inclusive education and attitudes towards social inclusion, are developed around the notion of inclusion.

a. Social inclusion remains a topical issue in the social, economic and political context of the 21st century, with all its specific challenges. It is reflected in a multidimensional construct closely related to two lines of conceptual categories: on the one hand, the education of people with special educational needs (with all the associated complexity) and, on the other hand, the social issue of integration, cohesion, participation and social capital, dimensions with which it is often wrongly confused (Cano-Hila, 2022). It has become a major area of concern since the end of the 20th century, highlighting, at the beginning of the 2000s, the need for essential changes in schools in this respect (Cîrtiţă-Buzoianu et al., 2023). According to the United Nations, "Social inclusion is defined as the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged… on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights" (Yang et al., 2016, p. 17, p. 20). The multitude of studies published on this topic unanimously agree that social inclusion refers to "ensuring equal access to quality inclusive education for all learners" (Cîrtiţă-Buzoianu et al., 2023, p. 483), i.e. to an intention to generate, on a macro-social scale "a society for all" (Atkinson & Marlier, 2010, p.1).

For the educational system, social inclusion is both a necessity and a challenge (Yang et al., 2016), especially if we take into account the many different categories of barriers towards it, including but not limited to the following: "lack of necessary knowledge and skills; role of support staff and service managers; location of house; and community factors such as lack of amenities and attitudes" (Abbott & Mc Conkey, 2006, p. 275). Social inclusion has become increasingly present in the education system, especially since 1989 with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, UNESCO. International education law felt the need to introduce rules on inclusion. Thus, education systems around the world, including in

Romania, have become more inclusive taking into account international documents such as: (Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1989; UNESCO, Salamanca Statement, 1994; No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, 2014; Van Steen &; Wilson, 2020), and also national legislation.

b. The issue of *inclusive education* can be fully and adequately understood if we highlight at least three conceptual/approach levels: 1. as a human right (Kivirand et al., 2023); 2. as an educational paradigm, a way of thinking about the educational approach; 3. as a set of educational practices, as a strategy to promote inclusion (Lindner et al., 2022), manifested at all levels of the learning process and systems, from kindergartens to universities, the latter being called to become inclusive universities in a globalised world (Leišytė et al., 2021; McArthur, 2021), both as an expression of a real need and as a desire of most of its actors (Thompson, 2021). Therefore, a correct approach and coherent implementation would imply the improvement of these three vectors, a radical change from this triple perspective, visible at the level of educational policies, teachers and stakeholders (Kivirand et al., 2023). From a pedagogical point of view, inclusive education is one of the specific student-centred approaches. Accordingly, it is the product of interactions between students, teachers and parents that ensure "the three levels of inclusion: educational, intrapersonal and interpersonal" (Lindner et al., 2022, p.7). Recent studies show that inclusive education theories usually refer to the schooling of all students coming from the same educational background, regardless of their status, and usually aim to ensure their presence in activities, their participation and their success (Argemí-Baldich et al., 2022). It is clear that inclusive education is an expression of a fundamental human right, namely the right to education. Its fulfilment in this form is based on a society in which all people are equal as human beings and requires the design of policies, strategies, processes and actions that guarantee the success of all students (UNESCO, 2023; Mora-Moral et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2020; UNICEF, 2017). However generous and expansive the concept, the difficulties encountered in the process are equally numerous and powerful.

c. Social Inclusion Atttitude refers to the way in which participants in the educational act (teachers, students, managers, decision-makers) relate to students in need of inclusive education. Most studies agree on a complex threefold psychological structure of attitude: cognitive (ideas, knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, values), affective (states, emotions, feelings) and actional (behaviours, actions) (Shpigelman et all, 2016). Given the bivalent nature of each attitude (it can be a positive/ negative report towards something), we

infer that a positive attitude can help to increase the support and favourable impact offered to these students, while a negative attitude will hinder and increase the difficulties of inclusive education (Novo-Corti, 2010). For Bandyopadhyay & Dhara (2021), teachers are the key actors in achieving inclusive education. The authors argue that teachers need to be knowledgeable, competent and sensitive to the diversity of children, especially those with special educational needs. Their positive attitudes towards inclusion are manifested in a deep understanding of the idea of inclusion, which reflects how they think (cognitive component), feel (affective component) and behave (behavioural component) in relation to inclusion. Edwing et al. (2018) argue that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education have a significant impact on its success in mainstream schools. The factors that influence these attitudes are of considerable importance. In his study dedicated to this topic (Supriyanto, 2019), he shows that most teachers have a positive attitude, but there are also negative or neutral attitudes towards inclusive education. Among the factors that have been identified as influencing attitudes towards inclusive education, the aforementioned author highlights teachers' professional training and background, their psycho-pedagogical training, and the categories of students' needs to which they relate. It can be seen that an appropriate attitude towards social inclusion depends on both internal, subjective personality factors of teachers (structured in teaching style, character, beliefs, values, stereotypes) and external factors (education, background, family and social background, special needs of the students they meet). In terms of equal access and everyone's right to education, this entails a full transformation of both internal (schools, teaching staff) and external (barriers of any kind: personnel, material, social, financial) environment (International Commission on Future of Education, 2021; Boghian, 2019). Bandyopadhyay & Dhara (2021) point out that there has been a welcome paradigm shift in this regard over the last 20 years, but that the change in teachers' attitudes is not yet manifesting itself at the desired level.

Teachers' Attitudes towards Social Inclusion (current studies)

Studies related to the concept of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education can be approached from two directions: As empirical research, which aims to know how it manifests itself in different contexts and educational levels, aiming both to identify the level and forms of manifestation and some possible comparative analysis, carried out using questionnaire, survey, case study, experiment, focus group (Charitaki et al., 2022; Kivirand et al., 2022; Lindner et al., 2022; Morentin-Encina et al.,

2022; Jury et al., 2021; Moral Mora et al., 2021; Pérez-Carbonell et al., 2021; Wilkens, 2021; Heyder et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Boghian, 2019; Pappas et al., 2018; Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Yada & Savolainen, 2017; Shpigelman et al., 2016; Barnes & Gaines, 2015; Novo-Corti, 2010); as well as theoretical studies exploring the concept of attitudes towards inclusive education (Argemí-Baldich et al., 2022; Cano-Hila, 2022; Yang et al., 2016), its structure, its manifestations, as well as a series of literature review studies (on the concept, structure, research tools, determinants, training/modelling modalities, etc.). (Cîrtiţă-Buzoianu et al., 2023; Borch & Laitala, 2022; Guillemot et al., 2022; Bandyopadhyay & Dhara, 2021; Kamanzi et al., 2021; Leišytė et al., 2021; McArthur, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; Supriyanto, 2019; Ewing et al., 2018; de Boer et al., 2011), with significant implications for improving future (possible) modes of investigation as well as modelling (Lindner et al., 2022).

A number of topical statements can be made by attempting to synthesise the results of the studies cited, such as:

- Studies on teachers' attitudes towards social inclusion have different scientific assumptions, different groups of interviewees and different research instruments. As a result, their findings are not easy to synthesise and are often conflicting (Heyder et al., 2020; Supriyanto, 2019; Yada & Savolainen, 2017);
- The quantitative studies that have been conducted point to the error of generalising the results obtained, as long as not all authors examine all three components of attitude (cognitive, affective, behavioural) (Bandyopadhyay & Dhara 2021);
- Not all teachers hold similar views on inclusive education (research has shown that either positive, negative or neutral views predominate) (Lindner et al., 2022; Bandyopadhyay & Dhara 2021; Yada & Savolainen, 2017);
- However, most teachers have a positive attitude (Guillemot et al., 2022; Bandyopadhyay & Dhara, 2021);
- According to a related study (Guillemot et al., 2022), teachers' positive attitudes have made moderate but significant progress since 2000;
- Although teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are assumed to lead to good implementation of inclusive education, few studies have investigated and demonstrated this relationship (Heyder et al., 2020; de Boer et al., 2011);
- Not all teachers correctly understand the role, importance and need for inclusive education (Kivirand et al., 2023);

- Most studies refer to concrete contexts and investigate attitudes towards the social inclusion of children with special educational needs, while other categories of social exclusion are analysed to a much lesser extent;
- Some of the teachers surveyed feel unable (do not have the necessary knowledge) to work with children with special educational needs, which among other things leads them to reject them more often (de Boer et al., 2011).
- There are differences between teachers in the form and degree of manifestation of attitudes towards social inclusion and inclusive education in relation to a variety of variables: *gender* (women have more positive attitudes than men, are more supportive, in some studies) (Bandyopadhyay & Dhara, 2021; Pappas et al., 2018; de Boer et al., 2011) or no such differences could be found in other studies (Guillemot et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2020; Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017); *age* (younger teachers are more open to social inclusion of diversity) (Guillemot et al., 2022; Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Barnes & Gaines, 2015); *environment* (urban teachers are more supportive of inclusive education) (Singh et al., 2020); *expertise background* (teachers qualified to work with students with special educational needs are clearly positive compared to other specialisations) (Guillemot et al., 2022; Jury et al., 2021; Supriyanto, 2019); *grade level training* (the richer the preparation at higher levels, the more open and supportive attitudes, according to Charitaki et al. (2022); Barnes & Gaines, 2015); *teaching experience* (teachers with less teaching experience have more open attitudes) (according to Guillemot et al. (2022); Singh et al. (2020); de Boer et al. (2011)) or, conversely, the more experience teachers have, the more open they are to inclusion (according to Charitaki et al. (2022)); type of disability (Jury et al., 2021; Supriyanto, 2019; Pappas et al., 2018; de Boer et al., 2011) or criterion (economic, ethnic, religious) targeted (Bandyopadhyay & Dhara 2021); stress levels accumulated by teachers (Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Barnes & Gaines, 2015);

Research objectives and hypotheses

The aim of our research has been to identify the perspective of the teachers working in high schools from disadvantaged areas, especially in the rural ones, to find some supporting models and future paths of specific intervention.

General hypothesis no. 1

There is a high level of interest in social inclusion among teachers.

General hypothesis no. 2

The teachers' attitudes towards their level of knowledge and experience of social inclusion are moderate.

General hypothesis no. 3

According to the teachers' perceptions, the cooperation with the family is important in facilitating social inclusion.

Research methodology

Operationalising concepts and defining variables

The independent variables are: age of the respondents, place of residence (urban less than 10000 inhabitants and rural), teachers' experience in working with students at risk of marginalisation, teachers' involvement in activities in facilitating social inclusion. The dependent variables are represented by the following dimensions of social inclusion: teachers' interest in social inclusion, their attitudes regarding the level of knowledge and experience in the field of social inclusion, their perception of the causes of social exclusion as well as the way to facilitate social inclusion.

Participants

The research group consists of 205 participants from a convenience sampling structured according to the independent variables as shown in Table 1. Out of the 205 participants, 126 met our inclusion criteria (specifically, living either in towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants or in rural areas) or completed all the data in the questionnaire. Thus, the respondents ranged in age from 20 to 32 years (58.9%), from 33 to 45 years (28.7%), from 33 to 45 years (28.7%) and from 46 to 58 years (12.4%). According to their place of residence, 67.7% live in urban areas with less than 10000 inhabitants and 32.3% live in rural areas. The distribution in terms of professional experience in working with students at risk of social exclusion and the structure of the group of respondents can be identified in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of teachers' experience of working with students who are at risk of social exclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	yes	96	76.2	76.2	76.2
	no	30	23.8	23.8	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Considering their experience as teachers actively participating in activities and experiences which have contributed to facilitating the social inclusion of students, the distribution of respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of teachers' involvement in facilitating social inclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	yes	78	61.9	61.9	61.9
	no	48	38.1	38.1	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Method

The research was conducted using a 23-item questionnaire designed to explore the dimensions targeted by our research hypotheses. The questionnaire was applied via Microsoft Forms and the items were structured into variants based on Likert scale or multiple choices.

Research procedure

The 20-item questionnaires with closed and open questions were administered online between May and November 2022 to teachers in the North-East region of Romania. A total of 205 responses to the questionnaire were received, but only 126 questionnaires which met the selection criteria of the study participants and were fully completed were validated.

Data analysis

The SPSS 20 programme was used for interpreting the recorded data.

Ethical issues

The participation in the study was voluntary, based on informed consent and data confidentiality. The study was initiated and carried out with the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of .... and met the ethical requirements of the Declaration of Helsinki for research involving human subjects and of Law No. 677/2001.

Results

The first dimension of the research aimed to investigate the interest of the teachers in the importance of social inclusion and in the training related to it. The results of the research on this issue are reflected in the data presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3 shows the results of the teachers' self-assessment of their knowledge of the concept of inclusion, where it can be seen that only 23.8% of the subjects consider the concept to be highly understood, 36.5% consider it to be clearly understood, 31% - fairly understood and only 8.7% - less understood.

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages regarding the level of interest in the social inclusion significance

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	highly understood	30	23.8	23.8	23.8
	clearly understood	46	36.5	36.5	60.3
	fairly understood	39	31.0	31.0	91.3
	less understood	11	8.7	8.7	100.0
	Total	126	100,0	100,0	

Table 4 shows the results of the survey on teachers' interest in the inclusion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. It can be seen that 31.7% of them consider themselves to be very interested in this issue and 59.9% consider their interest to be high, 5.6% show a fairly high interest and 3.2% a low interest.

Tabelul 4. Frequencies and percentages regarding interest in the issue of social inclusion of students

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	very high	40	31.7	31.7	31.7
	high	75	59.5	59.5	91.3
	rather high	7	5.6	5.6	96.8
	low	4	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the distribution of the results reflecting the subjects' interest in participating in training activities related to social inclusion and shows that 34.1% have a very high interest and 50% high interest in this type of activities, 11.1% have a relatively high interest and 4.8% have a low interest in their own training.

Table 5. Frequencies and percentages regarding the level of interest in participating in courses, training related to social inclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	very high	43	34.1	34.1	34.1
	high	63	50.0	50.0	84.1
	relatively high	14	11.1	11.1	95.2
	low	6	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Our second research dimension explored the teachers' attitudes towards the level of knowledge and experience in social inclusion. Thus, Table 6 shows the respondents' attitudes towards their own perception of the amount of their own information resources related to social inclusion. We can see that only 7.1% totally agree that they really have enough information resources, 36.5% agree that they have enough information resources to facilitate social inclusion, 43.7% do not have a clearly defined position in their self-assessment of their personal information resources on inclusion and cumulatively 12.7% of the responses reveal that teachers consider that they do not have enough information about what social inclusion entails.

Table 6. Frequencies and percentages regarding teachers' attitudes towards their level of knowledge about social inclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	totally agree	9	7.1	7.1	7.1
	agree	46	36.5	36.5	43.7
	neither agree or disagree	55	43.7	43.7	87.3
	disagree	15	11.9	11.9	99.2
	totally disagree	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 shows the attitudes towards the actual concrete experience in relation to social inclusion approaches. The data indicate that only 4.8% of the respondents strongly agree that they currently have sufficient practical and procedural experience in this field, another 31.7% agree that they have experience, and 50% have a neutral attitude towards the concrete assessment of their experience in social inclusion. 11.1% of the interviewed teachers disagree and 2.4% strongly disagree with their concrete experience in social inclusion.

Table 7. Frequencies and percentages regarding teachers' attitudes towards the level of experience in social inclusion.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly agree	6	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Agree	40	31.7	31.7	36.5
	Neither agree nor disagree	63	50.0	50.0	86.5
	Disagree	14	11.1	11.1	97.6
	Strongly disagree	3	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

With regard to teachers' perceptions regarding the causes of social exclusion and how they work together to facilitate social inclusion, we present below a quantitative analysis of the results. As we assumed in the hypothesis for this dimension, teachers consider that the family situation plays a very important role in the exclusion/maintenance of exclusion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. 43.7% of the causes are generated by the family's economic problems. The next most common issues are related to absenteeism from school or lack of inclusive approaches - 20.6% and community - 11.9%.

Table 8. Frequencies and percentages regarding the causes of social exclusion as seen by the teachers

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Poor economic situation of the family	55	43.7	43.7	43.7
	Lack of financial education at home	12	9.5	9.5	53.2
	Lack of educational infrastructure	5	4.0	4.0	57.1
	Lack of local economic initiatives	2	1.6	1.6	58.7
	Lack of community social work services	7	5.6	5.6	64.3
	Lack of an inclusive strategy at school level	4	3.2	3.2	67.5
	Lack of an inclusive strategy at the community level	15	11.9	11.9	79.4
	Lack of an inclusive strategy at the education system level	26	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

When teachers want to implement inclusion, their expectations seem to be rather negative towards a number of actors who play an important role in this activity. Thus, they think that the relational approaches will be difficult with the family - 73%, another representative source of difficult relational expectations is represented by local public authorities - 13.5%, NGOs - 7.9% and state institutions for child protection - 5.6%.

Table 9. Frequencies and percentages regarding teachers' attitudes towards sources considered as relational challenges in facilitating social inclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Family collaboration	92	73.0	73.0	73.0
	Collaboration with NGO representatives	10	7.9	7.9	81.0
	Collaboration with Child Protection Department representatives	7	5.6	5.6	86.5
	Collaboration with local public authority representatives	17	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Successful social integration of socially disadvantaged students is achieved by teachers expecting support from someone specialised in working with families (32.5%), school counsellors (22.2%), social workers (22.2%), information resources (17.5%) and only 5.6% from schools.

Table 10. Frequencies and percentages related to teachers' attitudes regarding their expectations of the support needed to facilitate social inclusion

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	School management support	7	5.6	5.6	5.6
	School Counsellor Support	28	22.2	22.2	27.8
	Social worker support	28	22.2	22.2	50.0
	Family worker support	41	32.5	32.5	82.5
	Information support	22	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	126	100.0	100.0	

Discussions

Based on the results expressed in Table 3, it is clear that there are a number of issues related to the concept of inclusion which need to be further addressed by the majority of teachers. Teachers, indirectly, feel the need for more information, cumulatively, 39.7% of them rated themselves as having a less clear and fairly clear understanding of the concept of inclusion. On the other hand, the fact that 60.3% of the respondents consider that they have a very clear and clear understanding of the concept, indicates that the respondents have the potential to understand and grasp phenomena involving inclusive aspects. The interest towards the real understanding of the concept of inclusion as well as the concern for teacher training has a profound impact at the school community level by changing the way of understanding and working with students, but also the perspectives of a teacher's role in inclusive approaches (Klang et al., 2020; Juvonen et al., 2018; Flecha, 2014).

The percentage of declared interest in learning concrete actions on the issue of social inclusion of students is high: 96.8% of participants show high and very high interest in this issue, but there are also 3.2% of respondents who show low interest. Combined with the responses to the self-assessment of their knowledge about inclusion, we can see that the high percentage of those who are interested in this issue may be a useful argument for teachers to be more informed about the theories and practical aspects of inclusion.

The data regarding teachers' interest in practical activities indicated that most of them did not have concrete experience of being actively involved in inclusive approaches and had little practical and methodological experience in relation to the issue of social inclusion of students (Table 7).

Developing teachers to be inclusive should be fundamental to their initial professional development, regardless of the level of teaching for which they are being trained (Kumari & Amminaidu, 2022; Symeonidou & De Vroey, 2019). In these approaches, teachers should be familiar with addressing diversity in all its aspects, know how to support their colleagues engaged in formal or non-formal inclusive education activities, and know how and from whom to seek support when their inclusive work encounters difficulties (Navarro-Mateu, 2020; Symeonidou & De Vroey, 2019; Sharma & Sokal, 2015).

The connection between teacher training and attitudes towards inclusion was also highlighted by Schmidt & Vrhovnik (2015), who showed that teachers without training in social inclusion issues have more negative attitudes towards these approaches, and that successful inclusion requires

both positive attitudes and good theoretical and practical training (Mirošević & Jurčević, 2014).

The family and its role in inclusive approaches are considered by the respondents to be both a resource and a difficult element to be approached and managed (Harding & Darling, 2003). The teachers are aware that inclusive endeavour is unrealistic without family support and without helping the family, especially in terms of economic aspects, but at the same time they see the management of the relationship with the family and support for the family (Brussino, 2020), as a challenge that would require a different approach for which they are not prepared (Hrabéczyet et al., 2023). The partnership between school and family and the positive relationship between these two actors increase the educational role of the family, which in their turn increase the chances of students' social success (Mutch & Collins, 2012, apud Brussino, 2020). As in the study carried out by Woodcock et al. (2023), we believe that the teachers' attitude towards social inclusion is a good predictor of the implementation of concrete inclusive actions, as a result we believe that it is an area worthy of further investigation.

The implementation of the principles of social inclusion is based on a society in which all people are equal as human beings and requires the development of policies, strategies, processes and actions that guarantee the success of all students (Mora-Moral et al., 2021). This is difficult without coherent and consistent practice, implicitly on the part of teachers.

Social inclusion is a challenge that requires the transformation of the social system and the educational space so that all students, supported by teachers, can participate in the process without restrictions and thus have equal opportunities for development (Morentin-Encina et al., 2022).

Each approach to social inclusion is a unique experience and requires personalisation and contextual adaptation.

Conclusions

The desire for training and the interest in a good understanding of the concepts and mechanisms that can facilitate the social inclusion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is a strong point that should be exploited by local and national decision-makers in the field of education. Thus, the aspects identified in the analysis of the first dimension of our study lead us to affirm that hypothesis number 1 is confirmed.

The data from the second dimension of the research, which is related to hypothesis number 2, show that when approaching social inclusion from the perspective of the theoretical and practical experience of

the respondents, most of them consider that they do not have enough experience in this field and their attitude is one of moderate involvement in inclusive approaches, which confirms hypothesis number 2.

Teachers who either want to be involved in inclusive activities or who are required to do so by the nature of the circumstances implicitly need to be trained in adult education and counselling, especially of parents. Without such skills, teachers will not be able to implement inclusive initiatives because they will lack the support and buy-in for change from the family. The analysis of the responses to the third dimension of our study revealed that the third hypothesis is confirmed, with the teachers in our study emphasising in their responses that the family is both an essential support and a challenge.

In order for teachers to become real agents of social inclusion, they need not only training in the specificities of this approach, but also concrete actions aimed at changing their attitudes so that they perceive themselves as effective and useful in this activity.

At the level of educational policy, inclusion must be seen as a systemic approach, with teachers receiving specific training and being integrated into multidisciplinary teams capable of providing not only logistical but also mentoring-emotional support.

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